

## HAIR HOLDING AND CONTAINMENT DEVICE

### INTRODUCTION

#### Technical Field

The present invention relates to hair styling and control and more particularly to devices for holding and protecting a person's hair while a person engages in an active lifestyle.

### BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Men and women utilize a variety of methods to hold hair in place while they are engaged in sports, work or other vigorous activities. One common example is the use of bobby pins inserted into the hair to hold the hair in a bun or other style. Another example is a leather strap having two holes through which a wooden stick is inserted which is used to hold a "pony tail" in place. Recent examples of the use of barrettes or clips which are worn in the hair to hold hair in place are disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 5,477,870 (1995), U.S. Pat. No. 5,816,267 (1998), and U.S. Pat. No. 5,520,201 (1996). Although this is not a complete listing of devices which are designed to hold hair in place, they are representative of the devices currently available to hold a persons hair in place during vigorous activities.

The problem with all of the devices which bundl the hair and then clamp the hair to keep it in place is that the balance of th hair which extends outwardly

from the clamping device and away from the head (such as a pony tail) is free to move. This includes the use of rubber bands or other stretchable bands of material to hold the hair. In active sports such as soccer, the free hair can interfere with a participant's play and can become tangled with the hair of another participant. Also, during active play, the device which holds the hair may slip and allow the hair to loosen so that a participant is forced to discontinue play and reform the hair into a bundle. On the other hand, the majority of the devices which securely clamp or pin the hair so that the hair cannot slip within the device are manufactured of a hard material which can cause injury during physical contact between participants during the course of play. Further, the use of devices such as pins or pegs to hold hair is not safe for active sports due to the possibility of poking another participant with a sharp object.

Thus, as will appear, the present invention fulfills a long time need for an attractive and simple device for holding an active person's hair and completely containing and protecting the hair for the duration of the period of activity.

#### BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention is a device which is inserted into the bundled hair of an active person and is held in place by combs or clamping feature. The hair which extends through the holding portion of the device is formed into a coil or other shape and completely contained within the cover portion of the device which locks securely in a closed position. The device is manufactured entirely of a semi-rigid material, with sufficient resiliency to maintain its shape, but not hard enough to cause injury to the wearer or another individual in the event it is struck

during hard play. The cover portion of the device may be formed in decorative shapes and colors. The cover portion may also include removable decorations. By adding a logo and color theme, members of a sports team could achieve uniformity of appearance through the use of the device in their hair. The device is designed to be easily inserted and removed from the hair while at the same time holding and containing the hair securely during activities.

The device may also be used to hold and contain hair as a fashion accessory where vigorous activity is not contemplated. In this application of the device, the device may be fabricated of a number of materials ranging from precious metals to plastics. The material may range from a relatively flexible material to one that is rigid. To add to the aesthetic value of the device, the device may be configured in a freeform shape and more loosely contain the hair.

The device provides an attractive means of holding and protecting a person's hair during sports and other activities. It is a further object of the invention to provide an alternative styling method which is attractive and gives the hair a neat, sleek appearance. The device is especially suited for holding long, thick and difficult to manage hair.

These and further objects, as shall hereafter appear, are readily fulfilled by the present invention in a remarkably unexpected manner as will be readily discerned from the following detailed description of an exemplary embodiment thereof especially when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings in which like parts bear like numerals throughout.

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

In the drawings:

FIG. 1 depicts one embodiment of the present invention with the invention holding a person's hair;

FIG. 2 is an isometric view of the preferred embodiment of the present invention wherein the cover portion is split into hinged halves and built-in combs are utilized to secure the device in the hair;

FIG. 3 is an isometric view of one embodiment of the present invention wherein removable comb-like structures are utilized to secure the device in the hair;

FIG. 4 is an isometric view of one embodiment of the present invention wherein a U-shaped structure is utilized to secure the device in the hair;

FIG. 5 is an isometric view of the device of FIG. 2 with arrows added to indicate the movement of the device from a closed position shown to an open position;

FIG. 6 is an isometric view of one embodiment of the present invention with arrows to indicate the movement of the device from an open position shown to a closed position.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

A brief description of an exemplary embodiment of the present invention is set forth herein in sufficient detail to allow a person skilled in the art to understand the operation and fully utilize the invention. The numbered parts of the description refer to the parts identified in the attached figures in which the parts bear like numerals throughout the invention.

Referring to Figure 1, the device 10 is shown inserted into the hair 12 of an individual 14. Note that the hair is pulled tightly against the head of an individual 14, and the balance of the hair 12 is contained within the device 10.

Referring to Figure 2, the preferred embodiment of the device is shown in which the device is comprised of opposing halves 16 and 18, wherein each half includes semicircular flange 13, 13a at one end of the body. The opposing halves have multiple prongs 24 which are forced between the strands of hair to hold the device in the hair when the device 10 is moved to a closed position. In the embodiment depicted in Fig. 2, opposing halves are rotatably connected by hinge 20. Interlocking ends 22 of opposing halves 16 and 18 secure the device when the device 10 is in a closed position. In the closed position of the device 10, the balance of the hair 12 is contained within opposing halves 16 and 18. Multiple cutouts 26 in opposing halves 16 and 18 create an artistic pattern on device 10.

Referring to Fig. 3 an alternative embodiment of the device is shown in which body 34 contains and protects the hair. In this embodiment there is but one circumferential flange 13 and no opposing halves at one end of the body. Removable opposing combs 60 have multiple prongs 30 which are inserted into holes 32 in body 34 capture the hair in the device. Opposing combs 60 may be utilized to enhance the

aesthetic appearance of the device by forming them of contrasting or bright colors and through the inclusion of artistic features on the portion of opposing combs 60 which is visible outside body 34. Multiple cutouts of different shape than cutouts 26 may be utilized to create a variety of artistic appearances for the device.

Referring to Figure 4, an alternative embodiment of the device is shown in which body 61 is secured in the hair using U shaped structure 36. Like Fig. 3, there is but one circumferential flange 35, except that there is a small space separating the ends of this flange. By using the spaced legs 38 of the U-shaped structure, the ends of the circumferential flange are tied together, wherein the legs are inserted through holes 40 in the body 61 and engage 42 formed in the surface of body 61 opposite to holes 40.

Referring to Fig. 5, the preferred embodiment of the invention previously depicted in Fig. 2, is shown with arrows included to show the movement of opposing halves 16 and 18 when the device is moved from a closed position shown to an open position. To open the device, the interlocking features 22 of opposing halves 16 and 18 are disengaged and opposing halves 16 and 18 are rotated about hinge 20 as shown by the arrows in open position.

Referring to Fig. 6, an alternative embodiment of the invention is shown with arrows included to show the movement of opposing halves 16 and 18 when the device is moved from an open position to a closed position. In the case shown, to close the device male features 62 of opposing half 16 are inserted into female features 63 simultaneously at both sides and opposing halves 16 and 18 are held in the closed positions by the engagement of protrusions 64 of male features 62 with opening 65 of opposing half 18. (Note again the semicircular flanges of Fig's 5 and 6. Further, although it is not shown in Fig. 6, the device can be opened and

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closed much like the device of FIG. 5 by disengaging protrusions 64 of male feature 62 from openings 65 at a single end of opposing half 16. The device is then opened by merely rotating opposing halves 16 and 18 to an open position utilizing the engaged male feature 62 and female feature 63 at the opposite end of opposing half 16 as a hinge.

The device can be manufactured from a number of semi-rigid materials. The dimensions of the opposing halves 16 and 18 can be made larger or smaller to accommodate larger or smaller amounts of hair depending upon hairstyle and quantity of hair protected.

From the forgoing, it is readily apparent that a useful embodiment of the present invention has been herein described and illustrated which fulfills all of the aforestated objectives in a remarkably unexpected fashion. It is of course understood that such modifications, alterations and adaptations as may readily occur to the artisan confronted with this disclosure are intended within the spirit of this disclosure which is limited only by the scope of the claims appended hereto.